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Gazette

File:
CFV

Family Values challenges city resolution

Sex-bias reference linked to gay rights

By **Michele Ames**
The Gazette

An anti-discrimination resolution passed quietly by the Colorado Springs City Council last May might be re-evaluated in light of questions from Colorado for Family Values, which stirred the statewide gay rights debate with its Amendment 2.

Part of the resolution says the City Council will have "zero tolerance for any form of discrimination of a racial, ethnic, sexual or religious nature."

It is the word "sexual" that has reopened the discussion.

"This has been simmering for six or eight months," said Councilman Dawson Hubert, who is proposing a change in wording. "No answers have been given to the people who wanted to know why the word 'sexual' was not clear."

Hubert's proposal would simply say the council is opposed to discrimination without listing the types. It was inspired by the concerns of Colorado for Family Values and its leader, the Rev. Paul

THE RESOLUTION

The Zero Tolerance Resolution:

"... the City Council will have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination of a racial, ethnic, sexual or religious nature."

Councilman Dawson Hubert's proposed amendment would have the sentence read:

"... the City Council will have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination."

WHAT'S NEXT

Hubert's proposal could be presented to the council on March 10. If the council agrees to consider it, it will appear on the March 24 meeting agenda.

The meetings are at 9 a.m. in the council chambers, City Administration Building, 30 S. Nevada Ave.

Jessen.

"We are not challenging the resolution," Jessen said. "We are seeking clarity for one word. And the word is 'sexual.'"

Jessen thinks "sexual" could be code for gay rights.

"We have talked to every City Council member, and the majority of the council did not vote for this to mean homosexuality or sexual

See **CFV/NEWS4**

primary ballot. But his name was pulled when party officials learned he was not eligible.

Alford is married to Linda Yocum-Alford, a School District 11 board member.

UNDER THE DOME

Highlights of Monday's action in the General Assembly:

Unclog Interstate 70: House members gave final approval to a bill laying the groundwork for the Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority.

The group would find a way to alleviate traffic jams on Interstate 70 west of Denver. The measure, HB1335, was approved, 49-16, and sent to the Senate.

Fine unfair competitors: Public Utilities Commission authorities could fine telephone companies if they compete unfairly or give customers inadequate service, under a bill moving from the House to the Senate.

Rep. Paul Schauer, R-Littleton, sponsor of HB1060, said as competition increases, regulators need the power to fine so they can halt violation of state rules and laws.

Under current law, the utilities commission must win court approval to fine a company.

The bill would permit the commission to set fines of up to \$2,000 a day each time a carrier fails to hook up a customer on time or doesn't respond quickly to a service problem. It sets penalties of up to \$2,000 each time a phone company contracts with a local or long-distance customer without their permission, a practice commonly called "slamming."

Needle exchange advances: SB99, which proposes to stem the spread of AIDS by giving drug addicts clean needles, was approved in the Senate, 19-15, and moved on to the House.

Child-care center bans: The Senate gave preliminary approval to SB157, which would prevent homeowners' covenants drafted after July 1 from prohibiting in-home child-care centers.

Associated Press

For on-line details and status of the above bills:

http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/stateleg.html

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CFV/Council members differ on interpretation

From NEWS1

preference," he said. "If that is the case, if that is a fact, then let's change it."

Hubert said that "sexual" could refer to sexual harassment, gender discrimination or sexual orientation.

And council members do have different interpretations of the policy's meaning.

Councilwoman Linda Barley said the resolution clearly speaks to sexual preference.

"I voted for it then, and I'd vote for it again," Barley said.

But other council members disagree.

"I don't feel like it speaks to sexual preference," said Councilman Randy Purvis, who said he would reserve judgment about Hubert's proposal until it is formally taken up by the council.

Colorado for Family Values has worked to oppose all measures that would include protection for gays in anti-discrimination policies.

In 1992, the group drafted and helped pass Amendment 2, a state constitutional amendment that banned laws protecting gays from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the amendment in 1996.

The Amendment 2 battle in

Colorado, which garnered national attention, started much like the current discussion.

In 1991, the City Council considered a civil rights law that initially included discrimination protection for gays. And even though the council eventually rejected the law, the issue gave birth to the Amendment 2 movement.

Local groups that support the resolution as it stands are monitoring the discussion.

"I think the City Council was taking a small step in the right direction with this policy," said Megan Day, director of Citizen's Project.

"There's been a slow and gradual moderation growing in the city, and this is a step in the wrong direction."

The legal implications of the resolution — or the change suggested by Hubert — are unclear.

Julie Tolleson, an attorney for the Colorado Legal Initiatives Project, which opposed Amendment 2, called the resolution "extremely ambiguous."

"And a change eliminating words wouldn't help that. If the resolution were to really protect sexual orientation, it would need to spell it out."

Michele Ames may be reached at 636-0304 or mames@gazette.com

the minimum allowed, leaving nothing for additional requests.

So the commissioners voted 3-2 to refer Anderson's request to the county's capital improvements program committee.

That committee is made up of the commissioners and the county's elected officials, including Anderson.

Commissioners Chuck Brown, Betty Beedy and Duncan Bremer voted to send the request to the review

to be equitable and fair," said Anderson, who supports that process.

But Anderson said putting off all decisions until the capital improvements program committee meets later this year stops the county from addressing critical needs.

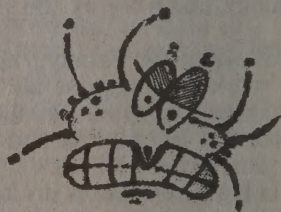
"This first year, it seems to me we've missed a whole cycle."

Scott Thomsen may be reached at 636-0394 or sthomsen@gazette.com

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